



Allandale Neighbor

December 2024
Vol 39, Issue 6

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

District 7 City Council Run-off Election

- » Early voting
 - » Mon., Dec 2 – Tues., Dec 10
- » Election Day
 - » Sat., Dec 14
- » Find polling locations at:
 - » votetravis.gov

Happy Holidays!

Trees for Allandale

Nicole Netherton

One of my favorite things about living in Allandale is the beautiful tree canopy. Our first neighbors in the 1950s and 60s transformed this former corn and sunflower patch into a beautiful urban forest, and we all get to enjoy the shade and biodiversity it provides. But as new homes and developments are being built in the neighborhood, there are more open lawns and empty landscapes that could benefit us and our neighbors fifty years down the road by adding a lovely native tree or three.

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A Little Birdie Told Me...

Monica Malhotra

A new local bookstore, Birdhouse Books and Gifts, recently opened its doors in Allandale. Located at the intersection of Burnet Road and West Koenig Lane, Birdhouse Books offers an inviting space for residents of our neighborhood to gather and discover the perfect book to curl up with. Abby Strite, the owner, has lived in the area for over a decade and decided to follow her dream and passion for reading by opening a store that welcomes people from a wide variety of backgrounds.

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Become a Member of the ANA

ANA Governance Committee

Be a part of our vibrant community! Allandale is one of Austin's most iconic neighborhoods, celebrated for its strong sense of community and diversity of lived experiences. Since 1973, the Allandale Neighborhood Association (ANA) has been a vital force, advocating for residents and fostering connections. In recognition of its impact, the City of Austin proclaimed October 4, 2023, as Allandale Neighborhood Association Day.

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The Allandale Neighbor

is published bimonthly by the
Allandale Neighborhood Association (ANA)

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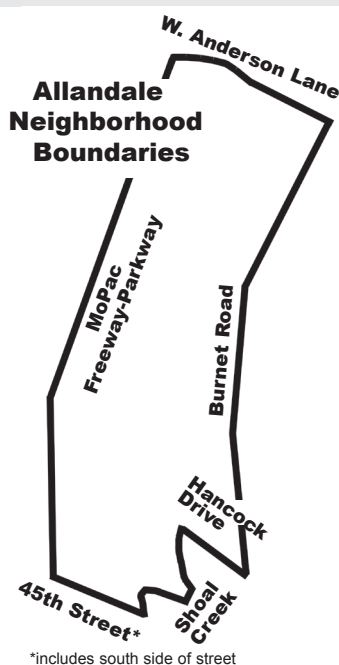
ANA Executive Committee meetings are held on the
first Wednesday of the month at NW Rec Center.
General Membership meetings are held in April and
October. (Meetings are currently held via Zoom)

Committees

BYLAWS Susan Morrison
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Allandale Police District Reps.

Ofcr. William Harvey, 512-974-8123
(Tuesday-Friday 6:00 am – 4:00 pm)
Ofcr. Willis Rounds, 512-974-8599
(Tuesday-Friday 6:00 am – 4:00 pm)



President's Letter

Carlene Wegmann Todd, (512) 761-8883, allandalenapresident@gmail.com

Dear Allandale Neighbors,

As the newly elected President of our Allandale Neighborhood Association, I am honored to serve our community. My husband and I have lived in Allandale for almost 20 years and feel so fortunate to be part of this vibrant and active community.

I want to thank our newly elected and returning Board and Committee members. We are fortunate to have such a talented and committed group of people sharing their time and talents for the benefit of our neighborhood. If you know any of our Board or Committee members, please let them know they are appreciated!

In the coming months, we will be working on a variety of initiatives aimed at achieving the following goals:

Increase the Number of ANA Members: Our membership dues help to pay for the printing and mailing of almost 4,900 newsletters 6 times a year, our beloved 4th of July Parade, other neighborhood events, forums, and much more. Yet with almost 4,900 Allandale households, we only have around 600 members...imagine what we could accomplish together with more members!

Encourage Neighbor Participation: "Many hands make light work" is an old saying I've always liked and found to be true. When people come together with a common goal, they can complete tasks more quickly. I invite each of you to get involved in the association's activities, committees, general meetings, and events. Your participation can make a real difference.

Expand Communication: The work of our Board and Committee members includes organizing community events and volunteers, staying informed on city policies that impact our neighborhood, monitoring crime stats and safety issues, tracking potential zoning changes, and so much more. In the months ahead, we will explore new ways to better inform neighbors about what is impacting our neighborhood.

Please reach out to me if you would like to learn more about the open committee positions or would like to learn how to get involved.

Sincerely,

Carlene Wegmann Todd

President, Allandale Neighborhood Association

Let's make our neighborhood the best it can be together!

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Bubbling with Excitement

Gail Dickinson

This year, after the July 4 parade, we had activities for children that included face painting, temporary tattoos, bean bag toss, and giant bubbles.

The giant bubbles were a hit, and many parents asked how to make the bubble solution and wands. The bubble solution gets its strength from guar gum, a thickening agent similar to corn starch. You can get guar gum for about \$5 at Whole Foods; a bottle will last a long time. The rest of the ingredients may already be in your kitchen. Baking powder contains a little acid, which helps neutralize our pH 8 water. (Note: Baking soda is basic, so it would raise the pH instead of decreasing it).

To make the bubble solution, heat two cups of water to near boiling (when you see the tiny bubbles forming on the bottom of the pan, the water is hot enough). Sprinkle in 2 teaspoons of guar gum. It's important not to form lumps as you add the guar gum. I put the powder in a wire strainer and tapped it over the hot water while stirring it with a whisk. Continue stirring over low heat until the guar gum is completely dissolved and the water thickens. Remove from heat. Sprinkle in two teaspoons of baking powder and stir until dissolved. Gently add 200 milliliters of Dawn dish detergent. Add ten cups of cold water to get the final solution.

If you want to make your own wand, you will need two dowels (1.5 inch in diameter), two screw eyes, and cotton rope. Drill pilot holes in the ends of your dowel rods and screw in the screw eyes. Tie the ends of 1 yard of cotton rope to the screw eyes, and then tie the ends of a two-yard piece of rope to the screw eyes. Younger children do better with shorter wands, so you should consider buying one dowel rod and cut it in half for a wand for them. You can also shorten the cotton rope to make it easier for young children.

We plan to have activities for the children next year and hope to get more volunteers to expand the offerings.

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ALLAN DALE

Neighborhood Schools Update

Tara Lane Bowman

Gullett Elementary. Gullett is excited to host its Geckos Around the Globe Celebration and Sing-a-Long on December 13. Gullett will celebrate and learn about the different cultures of our Geckos from around the globe, followed by a sing-a-long. More information can be found on the Konstella app.

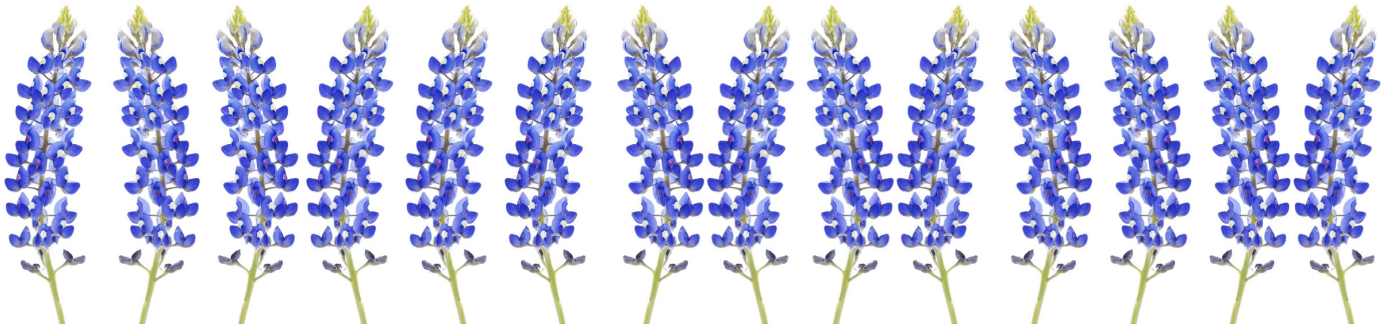
Highland Park Elementary. HP Science Fair projects are due Jan. 15. For a step-by-step guide to completing a project, visit bit.ly/40UkKza today.

Lamar Middle School and Fine Arts Academy. Get ready for one of the best nights of the year! Enjoy tons of fun activities: mechanical rides, laser tag, a petting zoo, obstacle courses, a 45' super slide, giant hamster balls, a talent showcase featuring local performers, and more. There's something for everyone, from kids to adults—whether you're a current Lamar student, alumni, or just a neighbor, come join the fun! Purchase wristbands or sign up to volunteer at LamarPTA.org (shop tab). Students can earn community service hours. Interested in sponsoring or performing? Email for sponsorship info at FestSponsors@lamarPTA.org. Want to perform? Email Fine Arts Coordinator Annie Reeves at ariann.t.reeves@austinsisd.org.

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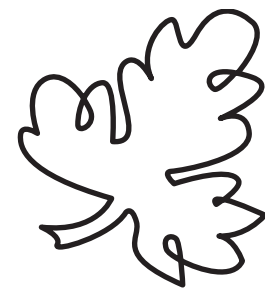


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We'd love for readers to submit ideas and articles.

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Join the Neighborhood Watch

ANA Safety Committee ana_safety@googlegroups.com

Allandale has a long history of active and friendly neighborhood involvement. From our beloved July 4 Parade, Northwest Park, school events, creek clean-ups, and our Neighborhood Watch Program, it is clear that Allandale residents love to support our schools, parks, and neighbors.

Block Captains are the foundation of the ANA Neighborhood Watch initiative and are integral to keeping the block involved in crime prevention efforts and information exchange among neighbors. This is a great opportunity to get to know neighbors on your block while staying up-to-date on safety, crime, and neighborhood events.

The primary goal is to watch out for one another and keep communication open, creating a more cohesive and safer community. Though the time commitment is small, the outcome can be very beneficial. The ANA Safety Committee will be hosting a mid-February 2025 meeting and looks forward to seeing our long-standing block captains again and meeting new ones.

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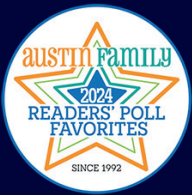


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Interested in becoming a Block Captain? Were you once a Block Captain and want to re-engage? Please email the ANA Safety Committee at ana_safety@googlegroups.com.

Thank you all for your participation in maintaining Allandale as a neighborhood of which we are all so very proud. We are especially appreciative of our Block Captains and are currently looking for new ones for the following streets:

W. 49 1/2 ST	HIGHLAND TERRACE	PIONEER PLACE	SILVERCREST
ARGENTIA RD & BORDEN RD	HUNT TRAIL	PLACID PLACE	SKYLARK
BULL CREEK - N. of Allandale Rd	JANEY DR	RAMSEY AVE	STONEWAY DR
CARLISLE & JAMAICA CT	LEXINGTON & MOHAWK DR	RICHCREEK	STRASS DR
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Trees

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Now that the fall is here, we are in the ideal time to plant trees in our area. Here are some tips as you think about adding trees to your yard:

Go Native. Native trees and plants are the key to biodiversity in our area because they are the best adapted to survive in our challenging climate. But not all natives are created equal! Dr. Doug Tallamy, an entomologist and founder of the Homegrown National Park movement, asserts that the best way to increase biodiversity in our yards is to plant native trees that harbor the most kinds of caterpillars. In our region, the most caterpillar-y trees are native oak (*Quercus*) species— by far the best choice and the most productive – native willow (*Salix*) species, and native cherry (*Prunus*) species.

Just be sure you are choosing natives for Central Texas, such as Escarpment Live Oak, Red Oak, Bur Oak, Mexican Plum, and Escarpment Black Cherry. The Homegrown National Park website and the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT) provide lots of great information for further research.

Plant Smart. Like all of us, newly planted trees do best if they have what they need to survive. In our climate, this is mostly about water. Planting a tree in July is a bad idea— it's so hot and dry that tree roots have to do such hard work to stay alive. The sweet spot for planting for us is during the fall and winter so that the tree has a longer time to get established before the heat and drought arrive again. There are also important City rules for distance from the right of way and other requirements. So add tree research and planting to your holiday to-do list.

Build Community. Invite your neighbors with empty lawns to plant trees with you! Teach your kids about how so much in nature depends on our mighty trees! Native saplings and five-gallon trees are readily available and planting will improve the neighborhood with shade and more birds and pollinators. Heck, we can even have acorn germination parties, growing saplings from the most beautiful oaks in the neighborhood. Taking these actions now improves the future in many ways. What an easy and fun project to take on together.

In addition to the websites already mentioned, a great resource for all things native trees is TreeFolks, a local nonprofit with tons of information about how to plant and care for trees in our communities. They also hold Neighborwoods events where they give away trees for “adoption” and planting. You can find dates and locations, along with lots of other great information, on their website.

The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is now! Join your neighbors in making our urban forest robust and beautiful this season.

For more information, visit:

- » [nytimes.com/2021/03/31/realestate/oak-trees-why-you-should-plant.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/31/realestate/oak-trees-why-you-should-plant.html)
- » [treefolks.org/learn-about-trees/tree-care-resources/](https://www.treefolks.org/learn-about-trees/tree-care-resources/)
- » [npsot.org/our-work/class-schedule/plant-lists-by-ecoregion/](https://www.npsot.org/our-work/class-schedule/plant-lists-by-ecoregion/)



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Allandale's Mayoral Candidate Forum

ANA Governance Committee

On October 15, 2024, the Allandale Neighborhood Association (ANA) hosted a successful Mayoral Candidate Forum at Saint John's United Methodist Church. Despite coinciding with the highly anticipated Allred-Cruz debate, the forum drew a robust crowd of 136, with many additional viewers on the live stream. The event highlighted the community's interest in local leadership and provided a unique opportunity for direct voter-candidate interaction.

Engaging Candidates and a Skilled Moderator. The forum featured four candidates: Carmen Llanes Pulido, Doug Greco, Jeffrey Bowen, and Kathie Tovo. Incumbent Mayor Kirk Watson was absent. The candidates discussed pressing issues such as housing, infrastructure, public safety, and civic engagement. Respected broadcast journalist Ron Oliveira professionally moderated the event, facilitating a thoughtful and dynamic dialogue.

A Community-Driven Effort. The forum was the result of months of preparation by ANA's Governance Committee, led by Nathalie Frensley. Key organizers included Dubravka Romano, John Tate (timekeeper), Gail Dickinson, Susan Morrison, Julie Peckham, Carlene Wegmann Todd, Mary Fero, Katie Dochen, and Cynthia Keohane. In her opening remarks, Frensley highlighted the importance of community forums: "In-person events like this remind us of the power of municipal democracy. The



future of Austin starts in spaces like this, where neighbors come together to ask questions and reflect on our shared vision for the city."

The event's underwriters—**Joseph and Caroline Reynolds, Susan Morrison, Nathalie Frensley and Timothy Fackler, and Allan and Nancy McMurtry**—were instrumental in covering costs. Volunteers **Julie Peckham, Steve Peckham, Hans Magnusson, Timothy Fackler, Steve Todd, Mary Fero, Susan Morrison, Gail Dickinson, Katie Dochen, and Joe Reynolds** managed crucial logistics and ensured a welcoming environment for all attendees.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16



Happy Holidays to Allandale Neighbors



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Allandale Quick Bites: Black Gold, Hissy Fit, & Pollo Regio

Robert E. Mace

The griddles are always griddling in Allandale! Wunder Pig's side gig, Black Gold, started slinging BBQ and cocktails at 1521 West Anderson Lane. Local trailer-to-franchise Monterrey-style smoked chicken joint Pollo Regio opened at 8620 Burnet. Downtown's Fixe Southern House (which bakes the best biscuits in town) opened up Hissy Fit in the Arboretum. Shishman Halal Mediterranean opened at 3301 Steck for dine-in, take-out, or catering.

Zen started serving sweet Japanese crepes with rumors of savories on the way. Kesos Tacos at 3901 Spicewood Springs is really close to opening. Dipdipdip Tatsu-ya introduced a more accessible and varied menu to accommodate a broader swath of the eating public. Fonda San Miguel announced that its new breakfast-lunch joint, Tzintzuntzan, will open in March. Pedroso's closed all its pizza trailers to focus on their brick-n-mortar location at Lala's Little Nugget. Genuine Joe Coffeehouse at 2001 West Anderson Lane ceased brewing.

'Tis the season of best-of lists. Matt Odam, Austin's second-best restaurant reviewer, included Bufalina Due (#7), Barley Swine (#10), Foreign & Domestic (#15), and Eldorado Café (#31) in his list of top 33 chowslingers in town. Austin Monthly gave



nods to Upper Crust (best bakery), Yard Bar (best place to bring dogs), and Torchy's (best queso). Austin Chronicle honored Eldorado (#1), Ling Wu (#3), and Bird Bird Biscuit (#9) as among the ten best restaurants in Austin. The Chronicle also recognized Bryce Gilmore of Barley Swine (Best Chef), Fonda San Miguel (Best Mexican), Bird Bird Biscuit (Best Breakfast Sandwich), Amy's and Lick (Best Frozen Treats), Eldorado Café (Best Enchiladas), Pinthouse (Best Beer Selection), and Juiceland (Best Juice/Smoothie).

Until next time, keep eatin'!

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Lettuce Recycle!

Dena Houston

Happy holidays, and happy recycling! The holiday season presents so many recycling challenges. Below is a list of some of the items that are in abundance at this time of year and advice on what to do with them.

- » Batteries. Household batteries, including rechargeable, can be recycled at most Austin public libraries and the Recycle & Reuse Drop-Off Center.
- » Boxes and Mailers. Boxes (even with tape and staples) can go into your blue recycling cart. Plastic mailers must go into the grocery store's plastic bag collection bins (remove the label). The brown Amazon mailers with a middle layer of white foam (even though they say "recyclable") cannot be recycled in our market. These must go into your trash cart.
- » Gift bags. Kraft Paper or plain paper gift bags can be placed in your blue recycling cart. Gift bags with any foil, fabric, adornments, glitter, beads, or handles cannot be recycled unless those items are removed from the bag.
- » Gift wrap paper. Wrapping paper and tissue paper (but not paper with glitter or made of foil) are recyclable and can be placed directly into your blue recycling cart. This can include paper with tape still on it.
- » Holiday greeting cards. Plain cards can go into your blue recycling cart. Cards with glitter or other adornments must go into the trash cart. Batteries must be removed from musical cards and recycled with batteries. Christmas photo cards can no longer be recycled and must go into the trash cart.
- » Holiday lights. Strands of broken lights can go to the Recycle & Reuse Drop-Off Center. Do not put these into the blue recycling cart.
- » Holiday party waste. Put your party-generated paper plates, napkins, and food products in the green compost bin.
- » Household clutter. Holiday time is a great time to get rid of old stuff and make room for new items. Many wonderful organizations in Austin will happily accept these items. Here is a link to the Austin Reuse directory to help you find a home for your old stuff: austinreusedirectory.com. Another source for getting rid of this clutter is the Buy Nothing Project. For more information on the project, go to buynothingproject.org
- » Shredded paper. It cannot go into the recycling cart, even if it is contained in a paper bag, because it cannot be separated for proper recycling. Please put your shredded paper into a paper or compostable bag and place it in your green compost cart.



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- » Styrofoam peanuts and bubble wrap. Styrofoam peanuts and clean and sealed bubble wrap will be accepted at most mailbox stores. Bubble wrap can also go into most grocery stores' plastic bag collection bins. Styrofoam is accepted only at the Recycle & Reuse Drop-Off Center. Note: The recycling center no longer accepts styrofoam peanuts.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

ANA Membership

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Our Community Traditions and Events: The ANA is key in organizing cherished neighborhood events, such as the annual Fourth of July Parade, Trunk or Treat, Neighborhood Garage Sales, National Night Out parties, and more. We monitor, analyze, and advocate for safety, land use and development, parks and recreation, and good governance and transparency. We recently added hosting Candidate Forums to encourage civic engagement in addition to members' voter registration efforts. We built and maintain a Deeds Restrictions database that ANA members find helpful. Stay connected through our Allandale Newsletter, community discussion group, and email updates on important neighborhood news.

Get Involved with Committees and Volunteering: The ANA offers many opportunities to get involved. Join one of our committees to engage in social events, civic activities, or environmental preservation, including park and creek projects. Your participation helps strengthen our community!

Affordable Membership with Meaningful Benefits: Annual membership is just \$20 per household and \$10 for households with seniors (55+). Dues include voting rights for members aged eighteen and over at our bi-annual general meetings in April and October and access to our deeds restrictions database. Your support helps fund neighborhood events, maintain our website,

host meetings, and more. Membership dues expire each December, with reminders sent to renew.

Connect, Vote, and Make a Difference! Membership empowers you to have a voice in the neighborhood's future. Attend monthly board meetings, engage in our bi-annual general meetings, and help shape Allandale by voting on issues that matter.

Please Join or Check if Your Membership is Current: Joining the ANA is easy, but sometimes members don't realize their membership has lapsed because their billing information isn't current.

To check your membership status or join:

1. Click "Join the ANA" on the landing page of our website at **AllandaleNeighbor.com** and follow the instructions on the "Become a Member" page.
2. To check your status, scroll to the bottom of the page to "Click here to manage your account" and log in.
3. Once logged in, you can check your membership activity and renew, upgrade, or update your billing information.



A Halloween gathering on Stardust Drive (photo credit: Julie Peckham)



We are Hunter and Julia Maloy. We live in Allandale and we are the proud owners of **PROSPERITY ROOFING**, helping friends and neighbors since 2010. Contact us and we will help you through the insurance process after the storm, giving you peace of mind.

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Snarf's Sandwiches

Robert E. Mace

Started by Jimmy “Snarf” Seidel in Boulder, Colorado, in 1996, Snarf’s serves up Jimmy’s ideal of what a sammich should be. And Jimmy’s ideal has earned Snarf’s a slew of best sandwich awards and a cult following in Boulder and Denver, allowing the Snarf Empire to expand to St. Louis and, yes, Austin.

At Snarf’s, dining is fast casual, and the staff are friendly. You choose from a board and, depending on the sammich style (regular or specialty) and what your tummy can absorb, you can order 5-inch, 7-inch, and 12-inch versions (but no fivers for the specialties). They also have a special sammich (they started with the Cubano when they opened). There are several sides (cole slaw, tater salad, mac salad, and the BIG PICKLE) and the requisite bags of chips. They bake their own bread and toast it (bonus points here). They sling soups and salads as well. Think of Snarf’s as a souped-up Subway.

The Italian, their most popular item, (salami, pepperoni, capicola, and mortadella with provolone; \$11.25), is worthy of its popularity. Chock-full of savory strata, this sandwich is more like a burrito wrapped with a crunchy flour tortilla. For an extra four bucks (or so), you get a bag of chips and a fountain drink. The Bride tried the chicken salad sandwich (choice of rotisserie chicken or chicken salad with provolone cheese, tomato, onion, hard-boiled egg, and chopped bacon; \$12) and found it oddly without flavor (although I see that they’ve now changed the ingredients, perhaps for the Texas palate). The French Dip (roast beef, swiss, and provolone with a side of au jus; \$13) was decent (although I’ve been spoiled by far superior versions at Bartlett’s and Carve). The Californian (bacon, turkey, avocado, sprouts, mayo, lettuce, and extra tomato; \$15) was a good recent special, yinnyng the yang of bacon with sprouts.



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The dine-in experience is somewhat institutional: This is a place for getting fed, not starting a turbulent romance. Prices are on the high side, but the proportions are not Weight Watchers-friendly. If you can control yourself from snarfing it all down in one sitting, you can take half home to fight another day.

Snarf's Sandwiches, 7301 Burnet Road, eatsnarfs.com/austin-burnet-road



Lettuce Recycle!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

Q & A

Which plastics are recyclable in Austin's recycling bins? #1, #2, #4, and #5 plastics are recyclable. If there is no recycling symbol on the plastic bottle or container, it must go into the trash can.

What do we do with wine corks attached to plastic caps? These go into the trash can. Wine corks that are not attached can be recycled at Specs.

What do I do with used sports equipment? Habitat for Humanity takes items like used sports equipment. Here is the web address: austinhabitat.org/restore/donate/donation-guidelines. The Assistance League of Austin Thrift House also accepts used sports equipment. Find them at 4901 Burnet Road.

Reader's suggestion: Used medications can be dropped off at the Travis County Constable Precinct 5 office, located at 10th and Guadalupe. They have a big barrel in their lobby for these medications. Here's their information:

Travis County Constable Precinct 5
1003 Guadalupe
512-854-9100

Here is a very informative City of Austin recycling website: austntexas.gov/what-do-i-do

Stay tuned for future tips, including creative ways to recycle or reuse. If you have any questions or recycling ideas, please send them to: denahouston3309@gmail.com.

Did you know...

Austin has a 'Tree of the Year'? Nominations and voting occur in the autumn each year.

Check out the past winners at:
austintreeoftheyearawards.org/about



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City Council District 7 Runoff

ANA Governance Committee

Austin's City Council District 7 race is in a heated runoff between Gary Bledsoe (bledsoeforaustin.com) and Mike Siegel (siegelforaustin.org). Allandale is part of City Council District 7, and this year's race has been one of the most competitive in Austin. While most attention this election season has been paid to the national offices at the top of the ballot, it is the municipal races like our City Council District 7 race that will affect our daily lives in multiple ways.

Voting Dates and Locations. Early voting begins on Monday, December 2, and ends on Tuesday, December 10. Election Day is Saturday, December 14. For a list of polling places, go to votetravis.gov. *Note: Eligible voters can vote at any Vote Center in Travis County, where you see the "Vote Here/Aqui" sign.*

Candidate Campaign Finance Reports. Those interested in campaign finance reports can access them through the City of Austin Campaign Finance Data Search portal here: bit.ly/4eHYiwp

Austin Mayoral and Council Races are Nonpartisan.

Remember, Austin's city elections are nonpartisan, so no party affiliation will appear next to the candidates' names on the ballot. Make your voice heard in this hotly contested race that is pivotal for Allandale's and Austin's future!


Mayoral Forum

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Engaging Dialogue, Positive Feedback. The evening was filled with thoughtful exchanges and candid moments, allowing voters to hear directly from the candidates beyond the usual soundbites and headlines. “This was an excellently organized forum,” said moderator Ron Oliveira. “The questions were substantive, and the community’s engagement was inspiring.” The candidates themselves echoed this sentiment, expressing gratitude for the opportunity to connect with constituents in a meaningful way. Community feedback was also overwhelmingly positive. One Allandale resident remarked in an email, “I’m excited to see Allandale take an engaged approach with city leadership like this. This is a huge step in making our voices heard!”

Building ANA Membership and Expanding Reach. The forum also served as a successful membership drive for the Allandale Neighborhood Association. Eight new members joined on the spot, and thirty others took home membership brochures. Interest in the Governance Committee also spiked, with fifteen attendees requesting more information.

The event’s reach was amplified by neighboring associations. The Austin Neighborhoods Council also promoted the forum, boosting visibility. Chris Mosser, the videographer, expertly captured the event for replay on social media, with positive men-



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tions circulating online up to election day. A Zilker resident noted on Nextdoor, “The ANA did a great job with this forum. You really get a sense of each candidate.”

Looking Ahead. The success of Allandale’s Mayoral Candidate Forum underscores the importance of grassroots civic engagement and highlights the critical role of neighborhood associations in shaping Austin’s future.

For those looking to join this effort, the Allandale Neighborhood Association and its Governance Committee are actively seeking new members. To get involved, visit the ANA’s website or email at allandale.neighborhood@gmail.com. Together, we can build a stronger, more connected community that listens, leads, and makes its voice heard.

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Asado's Taqueria

Robert E. Mace

The small aluminum window swimming in a sea of bright orange frames Danny Blair like the Mona Lisa; his slightly smiling face calmly takes your order before he steps behind the grill to conjure de Vinci-esque magic with chicken, cheese, and tortillas. Blair's bread-and-butter are the Mission-style burritos he adored after moving to San Francisco from Houston. When a career in accounting failed to light his griddle, he traded his abacus for lettuce and enrolled in culinary school. After stints in Frisco and at local taco elites Nixta and Suerte, Blair first rolled his Asado's Taqueria trailer to 45th and Burnet before joining Cheri Coffee and Flowers and My Sweetish Friend at 6726 Burnet.

Not surprisingly, as a chef, Blair has perfected preparation, proportions, and balance where you taste everything, and everything tastes great. Mission-style burritos are traditionally held together by steamed tortillas (and aluminum foil), but at Asado's you can "Make it crispy" dorado-style á la La Taqueria in the Golden Gate City. Trust me: you want to "Make it crispy." The dorado elevates Blair's burritos to OMG-I'm-dreaming-of-you-tonight territory. Chewy, crunchy, savory, and enormous, this is everything you want in a burrito. I'm not an expert in Mission-style burritos, but this is the best one I've had and, I suspect, the best one in Austin.

Blair also slings other dishes. Most notable are his epically good quesadillas in which that crisping magic elevates them into the best in town. If the prices scare you (regular burritos or quesadillas [protein, rice, pinto beans; \$12], super burritos or quesadillas

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Help out a neighbor ■ Pick up litter ■ Spay/neuter your pets ■ Plant flowers ■ Volunteer ■ Use our trails, parks, and greenways ■ Conserve water ■ Drive carefully ■ Have a block party ■ Attend a neighborhood meeting ■ VOTE! ■ Flip over an upturned turtle ■ Observe the speed limit ■ Take walks around the neighborhood ■ Pick up after your pets ■ Keep bicycle lanes open ■ Join

Take Pride In our Neighborhood

ANA ■ Donate household items ■ Report potholes 3-1-1 ■ Say hello to your neighbor ■ Help out a neighbor ■ Pick up litter ■ Spay/neuter your pets ■ Plant flowers ■ Volunteer ■ Use our trails, parks, and greenways ■ Conserve

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Little Birdie

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

As a mother, veteran, and queer woman, Abby has carefully curated her shop to include a vast array of reading material for all patrons. The store is continually adding to its inventory. It showcases quite a few specialty sections, which include titles from local Austin authors, the banned books list, fantasy, romance, and LGBTQ genres, children's and middle-grade series, and staff favorites. The store also offers a selection of gifts from local Austin artisans, including bespoke soaps, candles, journals, and greeting cards. Patrons are also welcome to sell back their well-maintained used books for store credit.

Birdhouse Books is bright and welcoming, with a cozy space in the rear for hosting meetings during regular business hours, such as book clubs or classes, or for attending one of the store's upcoming events. After-hours rental of the space is also available. It is the perfect complement to other bookshops that border our neighborhood, including Black Pearl, Christian Science Reading Room, and Dragon's Lair Comics and Fantasy.

Birdhouse has already cemented itself in our community by partnering with Gullett and Brentwood Elementary Schools to help facilitate and contribute to their annual book fairs and by providing free and reduced books to in-need students at Lamar Middle School through generous donations by community members. The staff at Birdhouse is excited to welcome students after school who share their love and appreciation for books.

In addition to the weekly children's story times held on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 11 am, the store holds frequent local author events, which include book signings and readings. Details for January's author visits, which include Evan Griffiths and Kari Ann Holt, two middle-grade authors, can be found on the store's online calendar. If you are looking for a local holiday show, Birchwood Theatre Company will perform 'The Grinch Musical' at the store on the evening of December 21. Tickets and additional details, including location and regular store hours, are available at: birdhousebooksatx.com.

The store currently offers snacks and beverages and will add a beer and wine menu later this month. Birdhouse's ultimate goal is to create a community 'third space' where people, with their many exquisite facets, can be free to breathe, relax, and read.



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Asados

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

[protein, rice, pinto beans, guacamole, sour cream, and Monterey Jack cheese; \$14]), note that one order is enough for two people. The tacos are large ("I just needed one of these," The Bride proclaimed) and good but not exceptional like the burritos and dillas. Bowls (aka burritos sans tortillas) are also in the playbook. You can order items regular or super, the latter adding guacamole, sour cream, and two to three bucks to the bill. I supe everything because I appreciate the contrast in texture and temperature.

Each order at Asado's comes with small ramekins of red and green pureed salsas. These seemingly innocent-looking salsas pack a punch, reminiscent of reactor drippings from the South Texas Nuclear Generating Station. Kudos to Blair for serving the spiciest side salsas this side of Muleshoe. If you're a fan of heat (like we are), these salsas are perfect for drizzling over your food. If not, keep them in your medicine cabinet for cauterizing wounds. It's worth noting that the salsa that comes with an order of chips is purpose-made and milder, catering to all taste preferences.

Many have speculated about Mona Lisa's enigmatic expression. Is she happy? Is she melancholy? Is she content? Is she mischievous? Devious? Ultimately, I don't know. But based on Danny Blair, there's a good chance she had just served a suped and crispy Mission-style burrito to yet another happy customer.

Asado's Taqueria, 6726 Burnet Road, (512) 298-3972





Take Pride in Our Neighborhood



Allandale Neighborhood Association New or Renewal Membership.

All residents within Allandale's boundaries are welcome to join the Allandale Neighborhood Association. Annual dues are \$20 per household or \$10 (over age 55 household). Dues may be paid in advance for multiple years.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Membership rates: ☐ \$20 dues per household ☐ \$10 dues per age 55+ household

Please make checks payable to: ANA ■ PO Box 10886 ■ Austin, TX 78766-1886 ■

Or join online via www.allandaleneighbor.com

I am willing to serve on the following committees: ☐ Bylaws ☐ Communications ☐ Finance ☐ Membership

☐ Nominating ☐ Parks ☐ Safety ☐ Zoning and Planning ☐ Other _____

Get Involved with your Allandale Neighbor Newsletter

Allandale Neighborhood Association



Newsletter Submissions: Do you want to submit an article to our newsletter on a subject of community interest? Here's what you need to know!

- All submissions require the approval of the Allandale Neighborhood Association president.
- Submissions are due January 15 for our February edition and March 15 for our April edition.
- Articles may be lightly edited for grammar, spelling, length, or clarity. Do not add any special formatting or bold text. Headings, subheadings, and paragraphs are fine.
- Google Drive submissions are preferred. Email newsallandale@gmail.com if you need guidance on document formats and we will assist you.

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